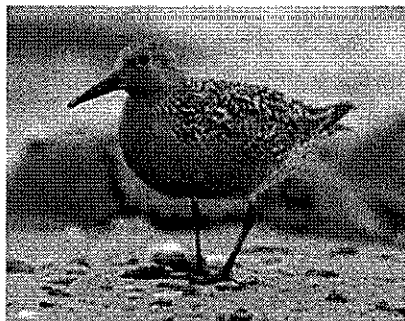


## Mispillion Harbor: Protecting a Haven for Red Knots

Among shorebirds, the red knot has a distinct migratory talent. Annually, in both spring and fall, at least 97% of migrating red knots gather at the same coastal migratory sites. In supporting such a heavy concentration of birds, this coastal habitat is critical to the red knot's survival. Given threats to coastal lands and declining red knot populations, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan recognizes the vulnerable bird as a "Species of High Concern."



*It is not an exaggeration to say that the few acres of beach in Mispillion are critical to the survival of the American red knot. There is no other site of similar size anywhere in the world on which a whole bird population depends. When the weather is bad the protected beaches in the harbor allow the crabs to continue to spawn and provide a lifeline to the knot.*

**- Nigel Clark, ornithologist**

### Summary

Working with the state of Delaware and a private landowner, the Fund protected a vital stopover point for numerous migratory shorebird species, particularly the red knot. This location is ideal for the small, grey-winged shorebirds because it includes habitat for thousands of spawning horseshoe crabs. The red knot feeds on crab eggs, getting the fuel needed during its only stop on the long journey north for the summer.

### Challenge

An estimated 80 percent of migrating red knots use Mispillion Harbor as a feeding and resting area during the bird's annual migration from South America to its Arctic breeding ground. When a critical beachfront property became available, the necessary funds and conservation expertise were needed to protect it.

### Solution

The Conservation Fund tapped its revolving fund to purchase this prime stretch of beach, in negotiations with a private landowner that lasted several years. Local fundraising efforts led by the Delmarva Ornithological Society

also supported the Fund's conservation activities.

### Results

The Conservation Fund protected approximately one mile of critical shoreline at Mispillion Harbor. The Fund will transfer the property to the State of Delaware for long-term public stewardship, protecting habitat for imperiled wildlife and ensuring generations of outdoor enthusiasts will get to watch and enjoy this unusual bird.